GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3462
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2001
USE OF SYNTHETIC FERTILIZERS
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Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have undertaken any serious study on the decline of fertility of the soil due to the excessive use of synthetic (inorganic) fertilizers all through the year;

(b) if so, the extent to which the fertility of the soil has declined;

(c) the total amount spent on import of feedstock for fertiliser plants in the country during the last year; and

(d) the steps being taken to promote organic farming in a big way there by saving on imported feedstock and also regaining the fertility of the soil?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI S.B. MOOKHERJEE)

(a) & (b): Fertilizer consumption in India at the national level still very low as compared to consumption in neighbouring and developed countries. The consumption of fertilizers in nutrient terms in India is about 95 Kg. per hectare whereas consumption in Pakistan, Bangaldesh, Sri Lanka, Japan, U.K. and Netherlands is 113, 135, 160, 375,379 and 542 Kg. per hectare respectively. Fertiilzer consumption in India, therefore, cannot be termed excessive. With regard to fertility of the soil, deficiencies of micro- nutrients in intensively cultivated areas do occur in the process of removal of soil nutrients by crops. The deficiencies are assessed through soil analysis and are accordingly corrected by application of required micro nutrients. Fertility status is generally monitored through soil analysis through soil testing laboratories.

(c) Presently, natural gas, naphtha and fuel oil are used as feedstock in fertilizer manufacture. Naphtha being on the restricted list of import in Exim Policy has not been imported by any fertilizer company during the last year. Fuel oil which is on free list of import has occasionally been imported by several fertilizer companies. Since its import is free from licensing, information on the exact quantities and value of import are not available. Fertilizer companies are dependent on oil companies for petroleum products as they do not have handling and storage facilities for the same. Hence import of petroleum products has been very limited.

(d) There are high fertilizer consuming states like Punjab where fertilizer consumption is about 184 kg/ha. The high level of consumption is also associated with high levels of crop production. However, to have the benefits of organic manure to improve soil structure and other conditions of the soils and for ensuring sustained crop production the Government of India and the State Governments have been promoting the concept of integrated nutrient management system among the farmers which envisages the use of organic sources of plant nutrients such as compost, farm yard manure and bio-fertilizers etc. in conjunction with chemical fertilizers.